

# Entergy **Notes**

News for our Customers



March 2007

## Unusually Cold Weather Brings Higher Bills

The nation has experienced one of the coldest winters in recent years, bringing sustained periods of low temperatures that are unusual for New Orleans and causing heating bills to rise for some Entergy New Orleans customers.

The 2006-07 winter season approached the extreme winter New Orleans experienced in 2000-01. This winter was 24 percent colder than winter last year and 37 percent colder than the winter before.

Generally, customers increase heating use when the outside temperature drops below 65 degrees. The longer the temperature remains below 65 degrees and the lower the temperature drops, the more energy the customer will use.

Sustained levels of gas usage by customers are evident in the high Purchased Gas Adjustment (PGA) charge and Fuel Adjustment Charge (FAC) on bills for gas and electricity use in January. Bills for use throughout the month of February are expected to remain just as high.

Entergy New Orleans has not increased the PGA or FAC charges and collects only the actual cost of purchased gas and fuel, without profiting. The PGA is simply the mechanism to collect and pay for natural gas purchased on behalf of the customer. The FAC is the mechanism to collect and pay for the fuel used to generate electricity used by the customer.

Entergy New Orleans purchases fuel at the lowest possible rates to keep customer costs manageable. Strategies used by ENO to help stabilize volatile fuel prices include placing gas in storage and financial hedging. Gas storage contracts allow the company to make gas purchases during off-peak times in the summer months and store the gas for use in the historically high cost winter months. Financial hedging contracts are purchased to stabilize gas costs during the winter months.

The company also uses a centralized procurement organization to purchase gas at the system level to lower the purchase price.

### Payment Plans

For customers concerned about paying their bills, ENO offers payment options such as levelized billing, which spreads the cost more evenly throughout the year, allowing customers to avoid increased bills in months where usage is traditionally high.

### Use Energy Wisely

Customers can make the biggest difference in their bills by managing the amount of electricity and gas they use. Energy conservation tips, such as setting your thermostat at 68 degrees to reduce your bill, can be found at [www.entergy.com](http://www.entergy.com). Customers can estimate their gas and electricity usage, learn how much energy-specific appliances use, and find out how to better manage their gas and electricity costs by logging into [www.entergy-ensight.com](http://www.entergy-ensight.com).

### Our Mission

The mission of the Entergy New Orleans Customer Service organization is to provide exceptional customer service safely and profitably by fostering professionalism, nurturing positive relationships, communicating effectively, unifying our efforts and adapting a self-crucial attitude in servicing our customers.

**Customer Service Director**  
Melonie Hall

**Customer Service Managers**  
Mike Dupuis, District A  
Sarah Sharp, District B  
Vacant, District C  
Lynn Lee, District D  
Katherine Miller-Harris, District E

For questions about your bill, or to report a gas emergency, call:  
**1-800 ENTERGY**  
(1-800-368-3749)

To report an Outage:  
**1-800-9OUTAGE**  
(1-800-968-8243)

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## Safety is No Accident On Parade Routes

### Entergy Crews Provide Carnival Clearance



Low hanging power lines, tree limbs, other city utility lines and gas leaks all pose a hazard to the hundreds of Mardi Gras floats and their riders that parade the oak-lined streets of New Orleans each year.

To protect riders and revelers alike, ENO clears the parade routes before Carnival season begins.

Two months before Fat Tuesday, Entergy New Orleans Electric Distribution crews attach a pole to the front of their bucket trucks and begin traveling the course of every parade route to measure 18 feet of clearance from the ground up. This is the maximum height of parade floats allowed by New Orleans city ordinance.

If hazards along the route are detected, ENO adjusts or tightens any power lines that could obstruct the path. For some parades, one ENO bucket truck rides ahead of the lead float to ensure that new service lines installed over the previous month stay secured.

Gas leaks can also pose a hazard along parade routes and the ENO Gas Operations group is on the scene to detect them well in advance of carnival season.

Armed with parade and marching club maps, the gas team performs surveys of natural gas leaks along parade routes in Orleans Parish, using the latest in state of the art high-tech gas leak detection equipment.

A mobile survey of gas mains in the street area is conducted with an Optical Methane Detector mounted on the front of a survey truck. The OMD employs an infrared light beam and sends an audio and visual signal to the operator if natural gas is detected. The device can detect gas in concentrations of less than 1 part per million at 10,000 measurements per second.

A walking survey of gas services up to and including the gas meter is also performed using a Flame Pack, a handheld gas detector capable of sensing as low as one part per million of hydrocarbons in the air. The operator is alerted to the presence of ions when the conductance of the flame and current flow through the flame are visibly changed.

Soon, the gas group will also use an even more technical method to detect natural gas leaks in hard-to-reach areas and difficult terrain with a handheld laser detector. Instead of walking the entire length of the service line to check for leaks, the detector will quickly and efficiently detect leaks within 100 feet.

Gas crews also test the atmosphere for gas in manholes and cracks in the paved sidewalks and streets.

Gas leaks that are detected during the survey work are repaired immediately and the surface area restored to its original state.

So the next time you yell, "Throw me something, mister!" remember that Entergy New Orleans cleared the way for you, your family and friends to have a safe Mardi Gras.

## One of Our Favorites From Our "Woodstoves to Microwaves" Cookbook



### Italian Salad

1 clove garlic, halved  
1 head lettuce  
1 tomato, cut in wedges  
1 can (2 oz.) anchovy fillets  
Salt and pepper

1 jar (4 oz.) marinated artichoke hearts  
¼ cup olive oil  
¼ cup wine vinegar  
8 black olives, sliced  
1 tablespoon oregano

Rub salad bowl with garlic. Break lettuce into bite-size pieces and put in bowl. Add remaining ingredients and toss lightly. Yield 4 servings.

## Assistance Programs Available to Customers with Special Needs

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of our New Orleans customers, Entergy New Orleans supports programs that help customers with special needs.

### Helping Hands

Developed in 1983, Helping Hands is a joint effort between Entergy New Orleans and the New Orleans Council On Aging (NOCOA) to provide energy assistance to New Orleans area residents. Administered by NOCOA, Helping Hands funds are donated by Entergy New Orleans employees and customers, NOCOA clients and Entergy Corporation. Eligibility requirements for Helping Hands aid include:



- Age 65 years or older
- On Disability or Social Security
- Below the poverty level

To find out if you qualify for Helping Hands contact the New Orleans Council On Aging at 821-4121.

### Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a federal program that provides money to local community action agencies to help eligible customers with expenses such as electric bills and home weatherization. Entergy New Orleans works with local-based agency Total Community Action (TCA) to help coordinate assistance for customers who need it.

### Elderly and Handicapped Emergency Assistance Fund

This program is a joint effort between Entergy New Orleans, NOCOA and TCA. ENO provides funding for the program, which is administered by NOCOA and TCA to address the needs of disadvantaged customers through direct energy assistance.

For more information about **LIHEAP** and the **Elderly and Handicapped Emergency Assistance Fund**, contact Total Community Action at 309-6707, 309-6708 or 309-6709.

## Spring Is Here: Dig In, But Be Safe

Spring is here and whether this is the year to grow the garden of your dreams, or just do a little "sprucing," remember to work safe.

Working in the yard can be fun and satisfying, but working outside can be very dangerous without taking precautions around power lines – those above and below the ground. Customers sometimes forget just how near lines are when they begin working with ladders and other garden tools. That can lead to tragedy.



### To Plant or Not to Plant

Experts say that gardeners can greatly increase their safety by following these few simple rules.

- Do not dig or plant around transformer boxes.
- Avoid coming into contact with overhead power lines when carrying ladders and garden tools, especially if they are made of metal.
- Electric-powered mowers and other tools should not be used in the rain, on wet grass or in wet conditions.
- Inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers before each use for frayed power cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings. If damaged, do not use the power tool.
- Always use an extension cord marked for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your tools.
- Remember to unplug all portable power tools when not in use.
- If installing a swimming pool or hot tub (whether above or below ground), never build near power lines.
- Always phone Louisiana One Call (1-800-272-3020), a toll-free number sponsored by gas, electric and telecommunications utilities to check for underground utility lines before any digging project.

## Ease Your Tax Burden This Year Many Families Qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit

More than 20 percent of Entergy New Orleans' customers live at or below the poverty level and many of them qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). But not enough customers know about the EITC.

The EITC is a federal income tax credit for low-income workers who are eligible for and claim the credit when filing their annual taxes. The credit reduces the amount of tax an individual owes, and may be returned to the individual in the form of a refund.

ENO wants you to know that qualified working families can receive up to \$4,500 this year through the EITC and that can make a huge difference in their lives.

In the 2004 tax year, 524,116 Louisiana residents received \$1.1 million through EITC, according to the Internal Revenue Service. But IRS research indicates that between 3.5 million and 7 million eligible households do not claim their credit, leaving billions of tax credit dollars unclaimed.

ENO encourages you to find out if you're eligible for this money-saving program.

For information on filing for the EITC and a complete list of requirements, interested applicants should review publication 596, which is available by calling the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-TAX FORM (1-800-829-3676) or by visiting the IRS Web site at [www.irs.gov/eitc](http://www.irs.gov/eitc).

### Child Tax Credit

ENO also encourages all eligible customers to take advantage of the Child Tax Credit. With the Child Tax Credit, you may be able to reduce the federal tax you owe by nearly \$600 for each qualifying child under the age of 17. More information on the Child Tax Credit is available at [www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,id=106182,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,id=106182,00.html).



### Energy Management Tips of the Month:

#### Hot Water Usage

*Don't Flush These Tips  
and Your Dollars Down the Drain*

##### Time It

- Take brief showers to use less than half as much hot water as used while bathing in a regular-sized tub.

##### Fix It

- A leaking hot water faucet that fills an ordinary cup in 10 minutes wastes more than 3,000 gallons of hot water annually.

##### Load It

- A full dishwasher load requires no more energy or hot water than a partial load. For more efficient operations, wait until you have a full load of dishes to wash.

##### Buy It

- Most showerheads deliver 50 to 15 gallons of water per minute. Energy saving showerheads deliver water at higher velocity and typically use less than 3 gallons per minute, saving a family of four more than 50,000 gallons of hot water a year.

### Did You Know?

You can find great conservation tips, safety information, corporate giving information and company facts by logging on to [www.energy.com](http://www.energy.com).

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